

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE), a champion of the taxpayer.

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I appreciate the gentleman for yielding, and I appreciate the leadership on both sides of the aisle for this issue.

I am heartened by the stated enthusiasm of the members of the majority party for the Taxpayer Protection Act. I am remarkably encouraged.

Today being tax day, it is appropriate that we speak about this issue, and it is mostly good work. I would commend the individuals who worked on this. It is mostly good work, but I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that real protection requires real reform, and the real solution to the challenges that we face as Americans, all of us in our tax system, is that we need fundamental reform.

This is an appropriate bill and kind of tinkers with the margins of our tax system, and I think those modifications are, as I mentioned, appropriate and a step in the right direction; but our current system is extremely regressive and extremely unfair.

So, to talk about the earned income tax credit, it's an appropriate thing to notify people who don't know that they are eligible for that. However, there are embedded taxes in everything that we purchase that make our system right now much more regressive than it ought be.

There is legislation available that would, in fact, promote fundamental reform. It would capture all of the underground economy that is fully a third of our current economy, nearly \$1 trillion. It would reward those kinds of things that we say that we want, like hard work and success and entrepreneurship and vision and all those wonderful American ideals.

That bill is H.R. 25. It is the fair tax, the national retail sales tax. It would bring about true fundamental reform and would bring about true protection for the American taxpayer.

So I commend the individuals who brought forward H.R. 1677, and I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that this is a small step in the right direction. However, real reform requires real change. Fundamental reform to our tax system is what is needed, and I am hopeful that in relatively short order we will be able to embrace each other with real fundamental reform to our entire tax system on the floor of this House.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), a member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague from Georgia, the distinguished chairman of the Oversight Committee, for permitting me to speak on this bill, and I commend his hard work.

I find no small amount of irony hearing one of our friends from the other side of the aisle talk about how it might be time now for tax reform. The other side of the aisle was in charge for 12 years, and it is interesting that in the last 6 years, when they controlled the White House and Congress and had three major tax bills before us, the words in the Tax Code increased 1.5 million; 1.5 million extra words, special-interest provisions, while ignoring opportunities to simplify the code and to deal meaningfully with the tax tsunami that is coming at us, the alternative minimum tax.

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I appreciate the hard work that the subcommittee has done, dealing with provisions like this that have no argument against them. These are things that are long overdue. I am glad we are moving forward. I commend the subcommittee Chair, and our Chair, Mr. RANGEL, for looking at other provisions that would level the playing field, that would deal with simplification, deal with fairness, deal with some of the problems that lower-income citizens have in terms of trying to cope with the complexity, and being able to equip the Internal Revenue Service to make sure that we deal with hundreds of billions of dollars that is uncollected revenue that shifts the burden on the vast majority of Americans who are hard working, who report their income, who pay their taxes fairly and on time.

It isn't the fault of the worker who has got the W-2 that we have this vast amount of uncollected income. We have the complexity. I appreciate what this bill represents, a true effort at bipartisan cooperation to establish a foundation. We can move forward to have an Internal Revenue Code that is fair and effective for all.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Madam Speaker, may I just inquire as to how many speakers the other side may have.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. That was my last speaker, Mr. Ranking Member.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Madam Speaker, before yielding back, I too want to express my deepest sympathy to the entire Virginia Tech community. Like every other Member of this body, my thoughts and prayers are with all those affected by the tragic and senseless loss of lives.

Having no further speakers, I urge a strong "yes" vote for this taxpayer protection.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I too, before I close this debate on this bill, join with my colleagues and others to mourn for the victims of this unspeakable, unbelievable, senseless act of violence at Virginia Tech. We mourn, we pray for the victims and for their families.

I also want to thank my colleague, my friend, the ranking member, Mr. RAMSTAD, for all of his help in bringing this piece of legislation, as I stated before, before us today.

Madam Speaker, I fully support H.R. 1677, the Taxpayer Protection Act of 2007. We must do more for Americans. We must protect taxpayers from being victims of fraudulent tax schemes, misleading Web sites and predatory refund loans.

H.R. 1677 does this. It provides higher penalties for deceptive Web sites and mass e-mails. It requires the IRS to notify you if your identity is stolen in a tax scam. It reduces predatory refund loans.

H.R. 1677 expands IRS outreach programs to millions of taxpayers eligible for the earned income tax credit who have not claimed it. This credit lifts millions of working Americans out of poverty each year.

Madam Speaker, this is a good bill. This is an important bill. This is a necessary bill. On this tax day we must do more for taxpayers. I urge my colleagues, all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote "yes" for H.R. 1677.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1677, the "Taxpayer Protection Act of 2007."

I would like to focus my remarks on Section 8 of this bill, which clarifies the intent of the Congress that the existing legal prohibitions on the misuse of Department of the Treasury names and symbols also extend to misuse over the Internet. I support this provision, which addresses a very real problem that currently exists with potentially misleading commercial websites that taxpayers may mistakenly believe to be affiliated with the IRS.

In February, the Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet, which I chair, became aware of three commercial websites operating under domain names which may confuse the public into believing them to be official IRS websites: IRS.com, IRS.net and IRS.org. In response to this situation, I wrote to the Federal Trade Commission Chairman Majoras, Secretary of the Treasury Paulson, and Internal Revenue Service Commissioner Everson to express my concerns that consumers who visited these sites might provide the operators with personally identifiable information and tax return information, enabling the operators to either market or sell this information to others, or to sell and market all manner of products and services to these taxpayers.

A consumer survey and study presented to the IRS and FTC in early January of this year by the Computer and Communications Industry Association suggested that a significant proportion of consumers misinterpreted these three non-governmental Websites as being sites hosted by the IRS. The survey showed, for example, that before viewing the website IRS.com, 47 percent of those surveyed believed the site represented the Internet address of the Internal Revenue Service. Even after viewing the site, 1/3 of those surveyed still believed the site was the IRS website.

Now, the IRS.com website bears a remarkable resemblance to the official IRS.gov site. Both websites have the same color blue banner at the very top, a grey search bar right below, and a white background with various links and search features covering the bulk of the page. Back in February, the IRS.com site even had an actual image of the U.S. Treasury headquarters building on the top of the